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A DREAM OF LIFE.

MORNING.

RIVER of life, why loiter so!
 I chafe to see thy waters flow
 So stilly by these dewy banks,
 Where the tall trees in careless ranks
 Forbid my eager, roaming eyes
 To search the world that round me lies.
 The Lotus opes its heart to me,
 And every little bud I see
 Nods invitation to my hands;
 While joyous birds in chorus-bands
 Thrill every leaf in all thy groves
 With matin telling of their loves—!
 The fragrance from a thousand flowers
 Loads the still air these morning hours—
 'Tis tranquil, happy as a dream,
 But somewhere on thy further stream
 There must be fields of broader sweep,
 And thy blue waves more gladly leap
 By banks where kindlier sunbeams sleep—
 More gorgeous bloom the noon-tide greet;
 And see! the earth and heaven meet
 In the far golden mist that lies
 Beneath those temples of the skies.
 Hasten, hasten—hasten to that strand!
 There surely is the promised land.
 Take these listless morning hours,
 I burn for the glorious mid-day bowers.—

Dreaming child, the land thou seekest
 Is a land of toil and heat—
 Heat when faintest, toil when weakest
 But no bower for pleasure meet.
 'Tis not gold thou seest, but gilding
 Noon has borrowed from thy morn,
 And its palaces while building,
 Melt to clouds by west winds torn.
 Little peace the weary find there,
 Hidden rock and wreck enow,
 And the garlands thou shalt bind there
 Perish ere they touch the brow.

NOON.

Now tarry a moment thou swift rushing river,
 Give me some respite—must I for ever
 Float helplessly on, inexorable tide?
 Each hour thy waters more rapidly glide,
 And they darken and deepen in pitiless flow
 O'er the golden sands I see gleaming below.
 These are the fields of my morning prayer—
 Did they mock me only with promise fair!
 There's a colder light from this noon-day sky,
 And the rosy summits I saw on high
 Now glitter coldly in far-off snow,
 Vanished their fickle, enchanting glow.
 Oh, river, sad river, comes there never a gale
 By whose kindly breath my boat might sail
 Backward to where by thy flower-fringed streams
 I cherished those joyous morning dreams?

Oh for the joy of that balmy air!
 That glowing sky, those fields so fair!
 For the glory of morning now faded away
 Into the light of common day!
 Noonday is sorrow and bitter unrest,
 Oh, river of life, are these hours thy best?

Dreamer at morning, still dreaming at noon,
 Spendthrift steward of God's own gold,
 Toil for thy treasure, for night cometh soon
 With silence and darkness, and cold;
 Swifter and darker the stream still grows,
 Hastening along to the unknown sea;
 But the wealth there hidden is only for those
 Who have learned to dive intrepidly,
 And fathom its torrents in rapidest flow;
 For here no briefest rest is given
 Till the red sun is sinking low,
 Where we reach the silent sea of even.

EVENING.

Sluggishly, sluggishly, gloomy river,
 You float me along to the tideless sea.
 The sunlight has left your grey banks forever,
 And perished each flower, and blighted each tree.
 The clouds brood cold o'er a barren waste,
 Whose bleak hills surge 'gainst the twilight sky,
 Where one red cloud by the purple night chased,
 Follows the day that has gone to die.
 Silence and darkness wait for my coming,
 Out in the mists of that unknown sea;
 Regretless I meet them, no more I am dreaming,
 I am glad for the rest of eternity:
 Weary and lonely my voyage drags on,
 Lightless and joyless I drift away.
 River of life, thy service is done,
 And mystery closes a dreamer's day.

Old man, thou passest, yet but little
 Of Life is measured by my stream;
 I have but launched thee into being,
 There is thy waking; this, indeed, was dream
 Whose only purpose is to learn the lesson,
 By wasting life, of how to live for aye;
 And while men dream adown my waters,
 Losing the false, they find the real, day.
 For those who learn content and patience
 By suffrance, humbleness through having pride,
 Truth by unlearning falsehood, the true gold
 By seeing gilded sham,—Life's gates stand open wide.

W. J. STILLMAN.

It is this difference of pursuit which marks the morals and characters of mankind; which lays the line between the enlightened philosopher and the half-taught citizen; between the civil citizen and the illiterate peasant; between the law-obeying peasant and the wandering savage of Africa. The man, the nation, must therefore be good, whose chiefest luxuries consist in the refinement of reason; and reason can never be universally cultivated, unless guided by taste, which may be considered as the link between science and common sense.—
Goldsmith.